(c) whether Government have made any assessment with regard to the persons living in the surrounding areas who were maimed/killed or seriously injured following the explosions in the firing range or while collecting the scrap from the firing range since it was set up and if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what are the existing arrangements for the safety of the neighbouring people and how does Government propose to strengthen it in view of the incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) As reported by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh, 1072 families were displaced from the Itarsi firing range near Bhopal set up in 1972.

(b) As reported by the State Government, 702 displaced families have till now been settled. Cases of 42 families are held in abeyance as the State Government have decided to settle first the families displaced due to the Narmada Project. The remaining 328 cases are not covered within the rules for such rehabilitation because they were not full owners of land in the area, or migrated elsewhere.

(c) In respect of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3422 answered on the 5th of December, 1988 the total reported cases of deaths on account of accidents in the range since its inception were 89. The up-to-date information is being collected from the State Government of Madhya Pradesh.

(d) The following arrangements exist for the safety of the neighbouring people:—

(i) There are display boards indicating the danger involved picking up scraps.

(ii) Regular visits by a team to the area in the vicinity of the range for educating the people with regard to the danger involved in entering the firing range.

(iii) Red flags are hoisted before firing is done.

(iv) Posts are set up for checking illegal entry into the range.

(v) Regular patrolling by Defence Security Crop personnel is being done during firing.

(vi) A project for barbed wire fencing of the targeted areas has been sanctioned.

MOU signed by BEL for marketing local area pagers

1497. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bharat Electronics Limited have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Multitone of the United Kingdom to market local area pagers; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the Memorandum of Understanding?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) The memorandum of understanding signed in January 1995 is to explore possibilities of a joint venture for collaboration in marketing and production.

Representation from resident of Secunderabad Cantonment

1498. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are examining numerous representations from residents of Secunderabad Cantonment with regard to property issues;

(b) if so, the number of representations pending with Government regarding Secunderabad Cantonment;

(c) in what manner Government propose to dispose them; and

(d) the details of system to settle claims pending with Defence Ministry from Secunderabad Cantonment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Representations with regard to property issues are examined and decided upon at various levels depending upon the nature of the representation; by the competent authority in each case, after examination of the available records and in the light of the Government policy.

Changes in administration of Cantonment

1499. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any changes in the present system of administration in various Cantonments;

(b) if so, the details of changes proposed; and

(c) whether these changes will be implemented soon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (c) Government is reviewing the operation of existing legislation to identify the changes if any which may be needed to the Cantonments Act, 1924. No specific decision has yet been taken in the matter.

HIV Positive cases

1500. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that some of the personnel in army and other para military/security forces who have been on missions outside the country for variable period of time during the last five years have tested HIV positive;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether these persons are still continuing to be in the armed/security forces or their services have been terminated; and

(c) what is the policy of the World Health Organisation and what is the policy of Government of India regarding employment of HIV positive people and also about those who are already in service and have been found to be HIV positive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (c) Twenty six personnel of the Army, on return from the UN Peace Keeping Mission in Cambodia were found HIV positive during the last five years. None of them have developed AIDS till date. These personnel are still in service and are on regulalr surveillance. However, one Master Warrant Officer (MWO) from the Air Force has died of AIDS in Lucknow. The source of his infection could be the repeated blood transfusion received by him in 1989 when he was on an assignment in Botswana. Besides these, two personnel of para military force have also tested HIV positive on return from missions abroad. Of them, one is still in service while the other has been dismissed from service on disciplinary grounds (not on grounds of HIV infection). The World Health Organisation advocates non discrimination with people who are HIV positive. India is one of the signatories to this resolution.

Non-availability of Medicines in Government hospitals

1501. SHRI NYODEK YONGGAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that patients are facing a lot of inconvenience due